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UNCLASSIFIED SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 01217

SIPDIS

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK//N2/N22//

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 001217

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E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PHUM MOPS PINS PREL PREF BK MOPS PINS PREL PREF BK HR
SUBJECT: THE NEST OF EVIL: SERBS INTENSIFY ATROCITIES IN
BANJA LUKA

REF: ZAGREB 0572

SUMMARY

1. THE USE OF EXTREME VIOLENCE AGAINST NON-SERBS REMAINING IN THE BANJA LUKA AREA OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA HAS ACCELERATED IN RECENT WEEKS. RECENT ARRIVALS FROM THE REGION HAVE PROVIDED NUMEROUS EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF EGREGIOUS EXAMPLES OF ETHNIC CLEANSING OF THE NON-SERBIAN POPULATION. THESE INCLUDE WIDESPREAD KILLINGS, RAPES, BEATINGS, DESTRUCTION OF HOMES, ROBBERIES, HARASSMENT, AND FORCED FIRINGS DESIGNED TO EXPEL ALL NON-SERBS FROM THE AREA. END SUMMARY.

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BACKGROUND

2. REFCOORD AND POLOFF VISITED GASINCI REFUGEE COLLECTIVE CENTER IN EASTERN CROATIA ON MARCH 23 TO INTERVIEW RECENT
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PAGE 03 ZAGREB 01217 01 OF 02 251809Z
ARRIVALS FROM BANJA LUKA, A CITY IN NORTH-CENTRAL BOSNIA THAT HAS SEEN TWO YEARS OF SYSTEMATIC ATROCITIES DIRECTED AT NON-SERBS. BY ALL ACCOUNTS, THIS HARASSMENT HAS INTENSIFIED SUBSTANTIALLY DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS.

3. AT GASINCI ALONE, REFUGEES FROM BANJA LUKA ARRIVE AT THE RATE OF APPROXIMATELY 50 PER WEEK VIA CONVOYS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS. MANY ARRIVE IN TATTERED CLOTHING AND CLEARLY SHOWING EVIDENCE OF EXTREME STRESS. DESPITE THE SEVERITY AND RECENCY OF THEIR TRAUMA, MOST WERE WILLING OPENLY TO DESCRIBE THE HORRORS THEY HAD EXPERIENCED OR WITNESSED. THE EXCEPTION WAS ONE MAN WHO CAREFULLY LIMITED HIS REMARKS AS HE FEARED RETRIBUTION BY THE "SERBIAN MAFIA," EVEN IF HE WERE RESETTLED OVERSEAS.

A LITANY OF CRIMES

4. REFUGEES RECOUNTED THE FOLLOWING EYEWITNESS EXAMPLES OF ABUSE:

A) TWO MUSLIM BROTHERS WERE MERCILESSLY BEATEN BY UNIFORMED SOLDIERS WITH BATS FASHIONED FROM WOODEN PLANKS. THEIR ASSAILANTS WERE KNOWN TO THEM; THEY HAD FORMERLY LIFTED WEIGHTS AND PLAYED SOCCER TOGETHER.

B) A GYPSY WAS BEATEN WITH RIFLE BUTTS FOLLOWING AN ID CARD CHECK WHICH REVEALED THAT HE WAS NOT A SERB.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 ZAGREB 01217 01 OF 02 251809Z

C) AN ELDERLY WOMAN FROM THE VILLAGE OF SEHER RECOUNTED THREE CONSECUTIVE NIGHTS OF HORROR. THE FIRST NIGHT A GRENADE WAS THROWN IN FRONT OF A HOUSE. THE NEXT NIGHT FIVE MEN IN MILITARY UNIFORMS TORTURED A NEIGHBOR IN HIS HOUSE FOR FOUR HOURS, CUTTING OFF BOTH HIS EARS. THE THIRD NIGHT APPROXIMATELY TEN SOLDIERS CAME TO ANOTHER FAMILY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, RAPED AND TORTURED THE THREE DAUGHTERS, AND BEAT THE FATHER TO DEATH. THE THREE DAUGHTERS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE DIED LATER IN THE HOSPITAL.

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E) IN ONE SECTION OF BANJA LUKA, CROATIAN HOUSES WERE BLOWN UP EVERY EVENING AT THE SAME HOUR OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL MONTHS. THIS WAS SO RELIABLE A PRACTICE THAT SOME WENT OUTSIDE AT THIS HOUR TO SEE WHOSE HOUSE WOULD BE DESTROYED THAT EVENING.

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INFO	LOG-00	AID-01	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01	OASY-00	DOEE-00
	EB-01	OIGO-01	HA-09	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-16
	L-01	ADS-00	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-02	PM-01
	PRS-01	P-01	RP-10	RPCS-01	SB-00	SC-03	SNP-00
	SP-00	SR-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-01	TRSE-00	T-00
	USIE-00	RPE-01	SNIS-00	NISC-02	PMB-00	/059W	
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UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 ZAGREB 001217

SIPDIS

F) NON-SERBS WERE ROUTINELY INTIMIDATED INTO COMPLETING DOCUMENTS REQUESTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT ASSUME OWNERSHIP OF THEIR PROPERTIES. THESE DOCUMENTS, USUALLY ISSUED ONLY AFTER PAYING SUBSTANTIAL FEES, APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN REQUIRED FOR "PERMISSION" TO LEAVE BANJA LUKA.

G) T
HE SERBIAN HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR ANNOUNCED VIA
TELEVISION, RADIO, AND PUBLICATIONS THAT NO MUSLIM OR
CROATIAN BABIES WOULD BE BORN IN THE HOSPITAL WHILE HE WAS
IN CHARGE.

H) ONE WOMAN HAD BEEN BEATEN NINE TIMES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS BY MASKED SERBS TRYING TO FORCE HER TO RELINQUISH HER APARTMENT. SHE HAD LOST TEETH, AND HAD SCARS UNDER ONE EYE AND ON HER UPPER LIP FROM THESE VICIOUS ASSAULTS. THESE BEATINGS ALSO OCCURRED FOLLOWING THE DISCOVERY THAT SHE HAD HELPED ONE SON TO FLEE TO SWEDEN. HER ASSAILANTS WERE, THEY SAID, INCENSED THAT THEY HAD BEEN DENIED AN OPPORTUNITY TO TORTURE OR KILL HIM FIRST.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 ZAGREB 01217 02 OF 02 251809Z
I) TWO MEN, ONE OF WHOM HAD A SERB SON-IN-LAW, WERE
TAKEN AWAY BY A SQUAD OF SERBIAN SOLDIERS. THE NEXT DAY
THEIR BODIES WERE FOUND NEAR BANJA LUKA. ONE WAS SHOT,
THE OTHER CHARRED.

NOTE

15. THESE ACCOUNTS CONSTITUTE ONLY A HANDFUL OF THE MANY
ATROCITIES REPORTEDLY WITNESSED BY RECENT ARRIVALS FROM
BANJA LUKA. INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTS WILL BE REPORTED IN
SEPTELS.

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